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Subject: How States Are Meeting the Farm Labor Problem (A few more local examples)*

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ARKANSAS -- To help meet the farm labor shortage, the town people of Greene County, Ark., are using their afternoons off to help farmers replant and work out their crops. Most business houses of Paragould close one afternoon a week, and a large number of the employees help on the farm that afternoon. Recently, the majority of the courthouse employees took their afternoon off to assist farmers in chopping cotton. A notable example of this town and country cooperation is the arrangement worked out by Noel Stuart and Raymond Frey. Mr. Stuart, who is employed by a grocery company in Paragould, spends all the spare time from his job working on Frey's farm. Mr. Frey states that Stuart's services have been invaluable to him during the labor emergency.

CALIFORNIA -- Ten volunteer farm labor camps, housing Victory Farm Volunteers and recruits for the Women's Land Army, already are established and more are under way. Seven counties in southern and northern California had volunteer camps in June, and six more counties will send out the call for vacationing harvest helpers during July.

CONNECTICUT -- Eugene L. Ayer, of North Franklin, is another farmer who is convinced that formation of the Women's Land Army was a wise move. His conviction came a short time after he hired a Land Army girl -- Frances Van Deventer. Miss Van Deventer hired out as a farmerette after taking the short course in agriculture at the University of Connecticut. Ayer was so pleased with her work that he wrote to the University as follows: "She milks the 20 cows and strips them -- morning and night -- without my having to come into the barn. Hence, I am far more ahead on my work than I would be if I did not have her."

ILLINOIS -- Full-time labor needs of Illinois farmers were reported to be almost supplied, while calls for seasonal workers were being filled in a wide variety of ways as food and feed producers of the State moved into the season of peak labor requirements. From now until frost, the State's U. S. Crop Corps program will be under pressure to meet a succession of demands for workers in pea canning, detasseling of hybrid seed corn, sweet corn snapping, and tomato harvest, while at the same time keeping the force of general farm hands intact. In one of the first tests of the emergency farm labor program, the State's asparagus crop was being harvested without any loss that could be charged to labor shortages.

* Food Information Series No. 19, issued in June, presented some examples of how local communities are meeting the farm labor problem. Examples contained in the present issue have come to our attention since that time. Additional information on these stories may be obtained from State extension editors, or from the Extension Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Plenty of high-school boys were reported available, with 1,000 signed up in Chicago schools alone. Meanwhile first steps were being taken in the organization and training of an Illinois unit of the Women's Land Army.

INDIANA -- Since the last week in April, over 200 school-age boys have been placed on Clinton County farms as Victory Farm Volunteers to help solve the labor shortage. These boys have been husking corn that had been left in the fields over winter for lack of help, thinning out and replanting tomato plants, and hoeing in the tomato fields, among other tasks.

IOWA -- Prompt response to an emergency call upon U. S. Crop Corps volunteers has saved 35 acres of corn in Hardin County, Iowa. Selmer Sampson, who farms 200 acres near Garden City, informed County Extension Agent Walter Eyre that he had 35 acres of corn still in the field and no help available to harvest it. Eyre got in touch with volunteer workers who had signed up in his recent county-wide farm labor registration; 10 neighbors volunteered their teams and wagons; and within 3 days the entire crop had been harvested.

KANSAS -- The farm labor situation in connection with the Kansas wheat harvest has been solved, first, because of adequate preparation, and second, because of the fine response of all people in Kansas to the great need of saving food which is so necessary to win the war. That's the statement made by Frank Blecha, State Supervisor of Emergency Farm Labor, Kansas Extension Service, Manhattan, after a survey of conditions over the State. He cites as an example the local organization perfected in Doniphan County. There the County Farm Labor Committee took steps for recruiting farm help to alleviate the stress when farmers need extra help in rush periods. Business and professional men of the county were asked to register as being available and willing to take a little time from their own business or profession to go out for a few hours or days to help the farmer who is in a tight place with his work.

KENTUCKY -- The Kentucky Agricultural Extension Service, which is directing the farm labor program, announces that several hundred men, women, and children were found to help pick the strawberry crop this year. They were placed in the Covington, Louisville, Bowling Green, Murray, and other berry-producing areas. County agents also recruited men in Johnson, Floyd, and Pike counties to work on farms in Mason, Bourbon, and Fayette counties.

LOUISIANA -- Approximately 750 patriotic boys and girls of De Sota parish have been "mustered in" as members of north Louisiana's first Land Army through their participation in the harvesting, processing, and shipping of tons of vital food crops grown in this area. As a result of their all-out endeavors there will be no farm labor shortage around Logansport and vicinity this year.

MASSACHUSETTS -- More than 1,600 workers already have signified their willingness to help Massachusetts farmers produce and harvest their crops, and many of them are already doing just that. Extension officials say no count has been made of those workers obtained by the farmers themselves, but that the number must run into the hundreds. The majority of those recruited by the emergency farm labor assistants in the counties have already been put to work. Others will be during the peak season. No effort has been made to recruit beyond the requirements, based on labor requests received from the farmers. Recruiting is done only as requests for help are received.

MICHIGAN -- Michigan farmers have employed at least 3,500 high-school boys and girls on a full-time basis for the summer, according to records of the State youth farm labor program. The youth farm labor report states that "an average of seven boys and girls from each of the more than 500 high schools throughout the State are doing full-time farm work, and in the central and eastern sections there are still some to be placed."

MISSOURI -- A dozen girls living in Cozad, Mo., performed a war food production job last year that may well be repeated in several communities this year. They detasseled hybrid corn seed fields. Doing the work for Sam Schmeackle, Cozad supervisor for a hybrid corn company, the girls worked from 3 to 4 weeks each on several farms. The girls apparently liked the work, and some found it easier than other work they had done in the past. Most of the girls last year made about \$4 a day. Many of them will do the same work again this year. Naturally, Schmeackle wants to hire them again.

NEBRASKA -- Several Lincoln Nebr., boys are going to have the feel of blisters on their hands before the summer is over. They are taking their "vacations" working on ranches and farms in western Nebraska. They'll put up hay, help take care of livestock, and handle various odd jobs. Wymore, in Gage County, sent its first contingent of U. S. Crop Corps volunteers into the field last week. A quartet of workers from the volunteer fire department answered a call from the Ted Gerdes farm where they helped put up 6 acres of alfalfa.

NEVADA -- One hundred farm laborers from Mexico are now at work on ranches in Nevada. Imported by the U. S. Government to assist in the production of food needed in the war effort, the Mexicans are on farms and ranches in Elko, Humboldt, and Douglas Counties. Four hundred more Mexicans for farm work were to arrive in the State during July.

NEW HAMPSHIRE -- The first candidate for the New Hampshire unit of the Women's Land Army was Marjorie Burns, of Quincy, Mass. Miss Burns gave up an office job in Boston to come to the Granite State to help raise food for Americans on the battle front and on the home front. She has been assigned to a farm in southern New Hampshire and has been given on-the-job training by members of the New Hampshire Agricultural Extension Service staff in cooperation with the farmer. Arnold Holmes, of Brockton, was the first Massachusetts Victory Farm Volunteer to start work in New Hampshire. He is working on a farm in Rockingham County. Also, 11 boys from the Jamaica Plain High School in Boston arrived at Claremont and Nashua recently to start working as Victory Farm Volunteers on farms in Sullivan and Hillsboro Counties. These boys are the vanguard of nearly 100 who were signed up from the Jamaica Plain High School.

NEW YORK -- Local volunteers, such as the 235 school boys and girls of Middletown who saved Orange County muckland onions from the weeds recently, are helping to make sure that many of New York State's food crops grow and get harvested. The 90 girls and 125 boys, who helped Orange County farmers, earned \$2 to \$3.40 each during the day, in meeting this crisis in production. Thirty-seven soldiers from the West Point flying center at Stewart Field, between Middletown and Newburgh, also gave up a week-end leave to weed onions.

NORTH CAROLINA -- Towns near the dewberry area supplied enough local labor to take care of the county harvest, reports County Agent E. H. Garrison, Jr., of the Extension Service in Moore County. R. C. Fields, who is assisting the county agent in handling the Moore County labor program, has completed a survey of labor needs for harvesting dewberries and says that, at present, sufficient local labor is available. One large grower, W. P. Seward of Niagara, says this help has been of greatest value to the growers.

NORTH DAKOTA -- Close to 12,000 North Dakota high-school students took leave from the classroom to assist in planting the State's 1943 war crops, according to a check-up just made by county extension agents and U. S. Employment Service workers cooperating in the recruitment and placement of farm workers this year.

OKLAHOMA -- A source of farm labor in Oklahoma hitherto practically untouched is being developed and will be of untold value in the production and harvesting of the State's huge wartime feed and food crops. This labor source consists of the thousands of nonfarm high-school boys and girls who have indicated their willingness to go into the fields or into farm homes this summer and do what they can to ease the farmer's labor problems. Of the 25,000 nonfarm high-school boys and girls in Oklahoma, 15,000 have already registered at the county agents' offices, under a program administered by the A. and M. College Extension Service, with the cooperation of public-school systems and the American Legion.

OREGON -- Women from many towns and cities are already working in Oregon's berry fields and food-processing plants, helping to insure the largest possible contribution of food from this State to the enormous goals set up as needed from America's farms in 1943. To complete the season successfully, however, an estimated 60,000 women from Oregon cities and towns will need to respond to this patriotic and profitable call in this State alone. This is the latest estimate of those are now busy in setting up the county organization designed to mobilize the largest amount of city labor Oregon farms have over used. If these campaigns are successful, Oregon once again will have topped the Nation, this time with the largest number of city women volunteer farm workers in comparison to population in the entire United States. Two good reasons exist for making this high goal appear within reach. One is that Oregon agriculture, west of the Cascades especially, is of a nature that can use a large percentage of women workers, particularly in the harvest season. The other and related reason is that Oregon city women have always made it a practice to work in the berry fields, orchards, packing plants, and canneries season after season.

SOUTH CAROLINA -- Bamberg County's efforts to help meet its farm labor problems, which are proving effective, are suggestive of how such problems may be met in other counties where similar conditions exist. With 1,324 acres of grain to harvest and no harvesting machinery, cutting schedules were worked out for machine operators to cut this grain. Threshing schedules for all the grain in the county were made up by the county agent's office. On six farms, there were machines but no labor to operate. One of the farmers hired a boy who had infantile paralysis when a child and who could not use his legs at all, to drive his tractor. This boy learned to operate the tractor as expertly as anyone for cutting grain, breaking land, and planting peas and grain. Another farmer had 52 acres of grain with no labor or power to harvest; so his son, who had lost his left leg in a railroad accident, procured an old automobile, put a truck rear axle in it, and, with the aid of a colored boy, cut the grain.

TENNESSEE -- When it was necessary for their father to be at the hospital bedside of their mother during her fatal illness, three Grainger County, Tenn., farm youth, Kermit, 14, Jean, 16, and Gaynelle, 10, children of Ellis Jackson, managed the farm and household with no extra help - and never missed a day in school. To do the job, Kermit would get out of bed around 4:30 a.m., build the kitchen fire, milk cows, and feed stock while Jean cooked breakfast. After the meal, Kermit and Gaynelle delivered milk to 12 customers, and these customers say they never were late with their schedule. Jean did the other housework and fixed school lunches. The livestock Kermit cared for included 14 cows, 4 yearlings and a bull, 4 horses, 12 hogs, and a flock of chickens. The Jackson children are a good example of how the resourcefulness and energy of farm boys and girls is being used to help in solving the present labor shortage.

TEXAS -- Smith County's farm labor program quickly got past the talk and committee stage. In less than 3 weeks' time it could be expressed in crates of berries and hampers of beans. For close cooperation between growers, buyers, canners, and especially the townspeople, has saved the berry crop. That means Smith County Farmers likely will net \$3,000,000 which might easily have slipped from their fingers if the unpicked berries had fallen from the vines. It means, too, that the fruit of 8,000 acres was saved to replenish Uncle Sam's wartime pantry.....There are many ways to aid in the war program and relieve the farm labor shortage, but three Nolan County home demonstration club women recently made a new kind of contribution. They drove school buses, relieving men for war or farm duty. The three are Mrs. Jake Carter of Maryneal, and Mrs. L. C. Cross and Mrs. Jack Davison of Divide. With the encouragement of Mrs. Elsie Gilkerson, county home demonstration agent, they agreed to continue their home duties, find additional hours for bigger food production, and help the children in their communities continue their education.....An army of 250 to 300 volunteer farm workers has been made available to the farmers of Dallas County for emergency crop work as the result of an order passed recently by the County Commissioners' Court. All workers employed on a daily wage basis have been given a week's paid vacation with the suggestion that they enlist in the county-wide farm labor pool organized recently under the direction of County Agent A. B. Jolley. As a result of this additional help, Dallas County farmers are able to save much more of their food and feed crops than would otherwise have been possible.

VERMONT -- During April and May, the first 2 months of its operation, the farm labor placement program of the Vermont Agricultural Extension Service received 1,300 orders for farm help. Two hundred and seventy-five regular hired men and 149 seasonal workers, mostly youths, were placed on Vermont farms. Additional workers were hired by farmers without the services of the program. The number of workers hired during the period, combined with the fact that there has been some slowing down in the number of men leaving farm jobs, means that there has been a slight easing of the Vermont farm labor shortage, particularly in the southern part of the State. It is expected that the Extension Service will place between 500 and 600 more seasonal workers on Vermont farms. About 500 of these will be boys from the New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia areas, and the remainder will be women and girls.

WASHINGTON -- Milking cows and caring for the chickens will soon be the new jobs for a group of Washington State nonfarm women who will take up year-round work as their way to help win the war. They will make up the first division of the Women's Land Army of permanent farm workers who will get 2 to 3 weeks special training before going to work. Training began about the middle of July at W.S.C. It is on the merit system, so those learning fastest will be the first placed on jobs. The theme of the training will be "learn by doing," and this means the women recruits will actually do jobs in training which they will later do on dairy and poultry farms. Twenty women will make up the first group of trainees; 10 for dairy hands and 10 for poultry.

WEST VIRGINIA -- The old adage of "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is coming to light again at the Tucker County farm training camp, where about 70 boys from all parts of the State are getting practical "on-the-farm" instruction preparatory to taking actual jobs on West Virginia farms. The Agricultural Extension Service, which is in charge of the training program, has just announced the appointment of Willard Wolfe, athletic coach at Terra Alta High School, as recreational director and camp counselor.

WISCONSIN -- Speaking of farm labor -- here's one Wisconsin town that knows just where it stands on manpower. Sun Prairie, with a population of just over 1,600 has completed a house-to-house canvass which shows every labor reserve available in the community. Block leaders covered the whole town and found 250 recruits who were willing to work full time, part time, during vacations, or after hours this summer.

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